Natalia Chaban, Henrietta Mondry, Evgeny Pavlov

30 YEARS AFTER THE BREAKUP OF THE USSR: RUSSIA AND POST-SOVIET EUROPE, NARRATIVES AND PERCEPTIONS

Special Issue Introduction

The year 2021 marks a major milestone in the global geopolitical history – 30 years since the collapse of the USSR. Our Special Issue is a scholarly reflection on the evolving and evolved narratives and perceptions formed in the post-Soviet time and space. In our focus is one piece of the post-Soviet puzzle – five independent states of Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Ukraine and Russia that once built the 'western flank' of the USSR. The five countries have remarkably different paths following the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. Yet, we argue that the three Baltic states, Ukraine and to certain degree Russia share a common plank in their identity of post-communist states, sometimes described as "liminal Europeanness" (Morozov 2011, Filippov, 2020). A "historical legacy of the Western European Enlightenment, which invented and juxtaposed Western (superior) and Eastern (inferior) Europe" (Matheson et al. 2021) has triggered a particular vision of this region in Europe of "ever becoming European" and being "betwixt and between" (Mälksoo 2009) East and West. These spatial identities, related to the visions of core and periphery, intersect with the temporal dimension. The 30-year time line is a critical historical period when slowly evolving perceptions, images and narratives start crystallising into modified and/or new mental schemas shared collectively. Moreover, there is a new generation born after the watershed event – a generation without direct historical experiences of the USSR and its shared legacy. This generation is already the backbone of the work force and voting cohorts in the respective countries. New identities emerge – identities without reference to the Soviet past.

The 30-year historical period is characterised by an uneasy intersection between different generations. The "rosy past syndrome" – a phenomenon well-known in political psychology (see Duffy 2018 for review) – means that older generations tend to see the past better than it used to be. While cognitive details fade as time goes by, the emotive and normative image elements remain and may dominate. This Special Issue reflects on the three image elements – cognitive, emotive and normative (see also Boulding 1959; Hopmann 1996) – and uses these concepts to reflect on political communication flows shaped by narratives and perceptions communicated

by influential opinion-maker and multipliers, as well as shared by the members of the respective societies. Of special interest to us are young people in the post-Soviet societies and their political imaginaries of the world, region, their country and themselves.

The temporal dimension is important not only for its longer historical span. This region has become a new 'hotspot' in the geopolitics of Europe in the most recent history of the continent. It features the ongoing Russia-Ukraine conflict following Ukraine's Euro-Maidan in 2013-2014, Ukraine's strategic vision of its "European choice" and its direction to the Euro-Atlantic integration sealed by the Ukrainian Constitution. The region is marked by growing security concerns among the three Baltic states that are currently members of the European Union (EU) and NATO, and ardent supporters of Ukraine's pro-Western orientation. Russia's ambitious and aggressive geopolitical stance in the region and in the world is perceived by these four states to be the main threat. Such perceptions are reinforced by the annexation of Crimea from Ukraine by Russia (the first landgrab in the post-WWII Europe), the war by proxy in the east of Ukraine, and numerous incidents and provocations challenging the Baltic states and Ukraine (e.g. Russian cyberattacks against Estonia, the capture of Ukrainian navy ships in November 2018, or deployment of substantial number of Russian troops – 85,000 to 110,000 soldiers (The Washington Post 2021) – and military drills near the border with Ukraine in May 2021). Challenging relations between the Baltic States and Ukraine on the one side and Russia on the other are unfolding against the background of an increasing instability in the post-Soviet space. The war between Azerbaijan and Armenia and the bloody suppression of domestic opposition in Belarus in 2021 demonstrate that the post-Soviet space remains volatile 30 years into independence. This period has also demonstrated that the current leadership of the largest and most powerful post-Soviet state, Russia, is very clear in its visions that the collapse of the Soviet empire "was the greatest geopolitical catastrophe of the century" (NBC 2005). According to President Putin, if he had a chance to alter modern Russian history, he would reverse the collapse of the Soviet Union (Reuters 2018). Perhaps more concerning is the Russian leadership's consistent anti-Ukrainian frame – from the 2008 statement by President Putin to President Bush that "Ukraine is not a country" (The Washington Post, 2018) to his most recent statement that Ukraine is becoming "anti-Russia," "requiring our special attention from a security point of view" (Reuters 2021). The Baltic states remain highly aware and outspoken on the current uneasy situation and threat perception. Voting against the 2021 Franco-German proposal to hold an EU summit with Russia, Lithuanian President

Gitanas Nausėda said the idea was like "trying to engage the bear to keep a pot of honey safe," while Latvian Prime Minister Krišjānis Kariņš said Russia might see a summit as a reward when diplomacy had failed to end the conflict in eastern Ukraine (Reuters, 2021). Reflecting on the complex region with sensitive geopolitics, tangled dialogue between generations and approaching historical celebration, our Special Issue features interdisciplinary reflections, collaboration between generations of scholars and diverse geography.

Contextual background: History, politics and geo-politics

One third of a century after the break-up of the USSR has featured a roller-coaster ride for the citizens of the former republics. They faced a challenge of revisiting their identities, cultures and political outlooks. Evolution and transformation – or resistance to change – have affected several generations in the post-Soviet states. In our Special Issue, we focus on the intersections between identity, culture and geopolitics in five post-Soviet states which ended with very different paths post-USSR. We put analytical focus on perceptions and narratives of post-Soviet Europe. We argue they build the foundation of the political communication flows inside the now independent societies and across their borders – when they interact with each other or when they relate to the world.

The three Baltic states – Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania – proclaimed their firm pro-Western and pro-EU orientation following the historic fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989. After the end of the Soviet Empire in 1991, the three states have entered the waiting list of the EU's candidates and dedicated a decade to major political, economic and social reforms of their societies. In 2004, the three Baltic countries became member states of the EU, an exclusive and highly coveted club of developed European nations. Approaching the end of the second decade in the EU, the three societies explicate ebbs and flows in their visions of Europe, Russia, immediate geo-political region and a wider world. However, their overall attitudes remain staunchly pro-Euro-Atlantic integration. Contributions to our Special Issue will reflect on the complex web of visions of Self and Others in Estonia (articles by Vlad Vernygora and Elizaveta Belonosova), Latvia (articles by Pauline Heinrichs, as well as Vineta Klienberga and Elizabete Vizgunova), and Lithuania (article by Gintaras Šumskas).

In contrast, the then newly independent Ukraine was not chosen by the EU as a potential candidate country. This decision reverberates within

Ukraine until today (see Chaban and Elgström 2018, 2020; 2021a, b). In the early 1990s, Pew Survey poll of the post-Communist countries (199X) demonstrated that Ukrainian citizens were more pro-democracy than their counterparts in Poland or the Baltic states. At that time, Ukraine saw itself as a country with a sizeable and diverse economy, highly-educated work force, large strategically-located territory and big population. Immediately after the collapse of the USSR, Ukraine had ended with the third largest nuclear arsenal in the world. Following the Budapest Memorandum, Ukraine relinquished its nuclear arsenal in exchange for promises by the signatories of the Memorandum – Russia, the US and the UK – to protect its sovereignty. Newly independent Ukraine has had a turbulent ride in the 30 years of its statehood. Endemic corruption, problematic rule of law and economic underperformance have riddled Ukraine. Yet, the Ukrainian political landscape has preserved the institute of democratic elections. Since 1991, Ukraine has been led by six democratically elected presidents. Irrespective of their political leanings and surroundings, all Ukrainian leaders have proclaimed Ukraine's European 'vector', even if on a superficial level only. When the fourth Ukrainian president reneged on his previous promise to strike an Association Agreement with the EU choosing Russia instead, the events of the Maidan Revolution in 2013-14 demonstrated that decades of independence have solidified perceptions and narratives of Ukraine belonging to Europe and produced new generation ready to stand for this vision. Post-Maidan Ukraine has struck several main accords with the EU and NATO. In 2020, Ukraine has become as Associate Member of NATO. In 2017, Ukraine signed an Association Agreement/Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement (AA/DCFTA) and the agreement on visa-free travel into the Schengen zone up to 90 days by Ukrainian citizens. However, to this day, the EU has not opened a pathway to membership candidacy for Ukraine. Contributions to our Special Issue deal with Ukraine's problematics: article by Sabatovych dissects narratives and perceptions of the EU evolving over time and article by Natalia Chaban, Svitlana Zhabotynska and Anatoliy Chaban consider the external reception of the EU's granting of the visa-free status to Ukrainian citizens (case-study Russia).

Russia's initial reaction to the transforming post-Soviet world saw Russia trying on some democratic practices and reforms under Yeltsin's rule. Yet, following the change in leadership, Russian political outlook towards the West (including the EU) has reverted back to the guarded and even hostile attitudes. The change was partially triggered by the EU's policies and initiatives towards its eastern neighbours. These were interpreted by Russia

as meddling into what traditionally has been the Russian sphere of influence, if not a threat by the West. In addition, the end of the first decade of the 21st century showed to the world the EU challenged by multiple crises of political, economic and social nature. Finally, the changing global landscape demonstrated an eroding multilateral rules-based global order, with a new set of existential non-traditional threats (climate catastrophe and global pandemics among them). A combination of internal and external factors have revived Russia's "grand" geopolitical narrative as a key actor in Europe and globally. Contributions to our Special Issue engage with post-Soviet Russia's self-narratives and self-images vis-à-vis Europe and the rest of the world, while factoring temporal dimension (article by Henrietta Mondry and Evgeny Pavlov), Russia's narrative formulate and disseminated by influential think tanks (and specifically on "grey zones") (article by Šarūnas Liekis and Viktorija Rusinaitė), and Russia's media narratives on Ukraine and its pro-European dynamics revealed in framing Ukraine receiving a no-visa regime from the EU (article by Natalia Chaban, Svitlana Zhabotynska and Anatoliy Chaban).

This brief historical overview highlights that the five countries have intricate connections to each other in the course of their short-, mid- and long-term history, and their current and historical understanding of and attitudes to the West and the EU are a part of the story of their relations. Importantly, all contributions to the Special Issue also reflect on narratives and perceptions of Russia vis-à-vis Europe – as either a main or secondary theme. The three Baltic States and Ukraine remain 'in between' the two bigger players in the region – feeding into the concept of "liminal Europeanness" discussed at the start of this Introduction. We argue that a geopolitical competition between the two regional 'hegemons' will continue to affect Ukraine in the years to come, but also the three Baltic EU member states. The latter have a significant share of population who are Russian by ethnicity or Russian-speaking due to the legacies and migration patterns of the Soviet Union (33.8% of Russian speakers in Latvia, 29.8% in Estonia and 8% in Lithuania (Jakniunaite 2020)).

Self-Other Imaginations: Continuum of Otherness

One of the leading premises that informs our Special Issue is that narratives and perceptions, if dissected in cognitive, emotive and normative planes (see political psychologist Hopmann 1994), will not reveal clear-cut patterns. On the contrary, narratives and perceptions will demonstrate a complex intersection of self-identities and visions of the Other, the latter

located along the continuum of Otherness. Different positions on the continuum will elicit different attitudes. For the Baltic states, it is a dominant self-vision of historically belonging to the West and returning to the Western 'family' after the collapse of the USSR. The Baltic societies conceive that their dominant norms and values resonate fully with the normative priorities of the Western societies. This vision, however, is complicated by the argument of "liminality" of the Baltic identities – the constant need to overcome their contested "Europeanness" as post-Soviet and post-socialist states caught between East and West (Mälksoo, 2009). Russia, on the other hand, is perceived to belong to a different normative camp (see e.g. Kleinberga and Vizgunova or Vernygora and Belonosova in this Issue). One of the main findings of the Special Issue is a particular vision of the Self in the region and the world emerging among younger citizens of the Baltic EU states. For them, the historical break-through to Europe has been already achieved by the Baltic nations and it underlines a proud self-narrative of the present and future and informs narratives on Ukraine (see e.g. articles by Šumskas and Heinrichs in this Issue).

Literature in the field points to the post-Soviet Ukraine having a deeply polarised self-vision. On the one hand, it is about Ukraine's centuries-long strife to be a part of the Western paradigm and value system. This narrative justifies the need to reform the Ukrainian society post-USSR. On the other hand, there is a narrative of the historical connections with Russia and certain normative resonances with the neighbour to the East. This narrative contests Western values and Ukraine's rapprochement with the West. The most recent events in the relations between Ukraine and Russia – the annexation of Crimea, the ongoing violent conflict in the east of Ukraine and propaganda affronts undertaken by the Russian Federation against Ukraine – have been solidifying the images of Russia as Ukraine's hostile Other (see also Sabatovych in this Issue). In contrast, the Western actors (including the EU and the Baltic states in it) are increasingly seen as allies and friends.

Russia's self-vision registers becoming a key pole of the global politics of the 21st century. This includes Russia's self-definition as an heir presumptive to the USSR legacy – a vision that provides justification to control former Soviet republics. Following this self-image, Russia sees itself as a viable power with a proud history of domination and influence and current geopolitical ambitions. Official Kremlin narratives asserting this right to hegemony in the post-Soviet space explicitly draw on neo-Eurasianist proleptic constructs and neo-medievalist models propagated by Russia's ultra-right intellectuals (see Mondry and Pavlov in this Issue).

Russia also defines itself as an international actor with a unique (Eurasian) set of norms and values informed by its rich culture and history. Importantly, Russia conceives these values as different – better and often opposing – to the norms and values of the West (including Europe) (see Liekis and Rusinaitė in this Issue). In this context, Russia solidifies the image of Ukraine which is perceived to be moving in its norms and values closer to the West/Europe – as the Other (see Chaban et al. in this Issue), arguably corroborating the official Russian narrative of Ukraine becoming an "anti-Russia" (see above).

The Russo-Ukrainian conflict reminds us again that intersections of identity and geopolitics are never simple. The Russian treatment of the former Soviet republics as it "natural" area of geopolitical control clashed with the EU's vision of its enlargement and neighbourhood policy. Initially, Russia, hit by the collapse of the USSR on socio-economic and political planes, did not react aggressively to the introduction of the EU's Neighbourhood Policy in 1995. Yet, the creation of the EU's Eastern Partnership with six post-Soviet states of Belarus, Moldova, Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan and Ukraine in 2009 was perceived in Russia as a threat. This perception was further supported by the official applications by Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia to become members of NATO (declined by the Alliance). Russia saw the West encroaching into Russia's traditional sphere of geopolitical influence and has retaliated with aggression against Georgia and later Ukraine, the two most pro-Western post-Soviet states. The Baltic states, aware of Russia's hard power and methods of influence through their own experiences in the past, share growing concerns about their own security. These states have become the most vociferous supporters of Ukraine (and earlier Georgia), advocating for a pan-EU support of Ukraine in the ongoing violent conflict, insisting on sanctions against Russia and backing up Ukraine's case as a future EU candidate country.

A complicated map of relations between the six actors brings in the first key theme in our Special Issue – Self-Other relations in an uneasy process of identity transformations typical for this region. This theme invites systematic considerations of the process of Othering and its result – the imaginary continuum of Otherness from friends and allies to distinct Others who may become enemies and even nemeses (see e.g. the model of "difference" – "otherness" – "enmity" examined by Chaban et al. in this Issue). All contributions to our Special Issue engage with the continuum of Otherness and contemplate its role in shaping and re-shaping identities in this

geopolitical region. The contributions also factor complex interactions between time, space and change.

Temporal Considerations

The second theme that unites contributions to this Special Issue deals with fluidity and uncertainty, changing world and transition. In our brief overview above, we highlighted profound historical changes in the last 30 years in this region. However, the societies in the focus of this SI have been affected by transformation and change event before the collapse of the USSR in the summer of 1991. Perestroika, a complex reform programme of the last Soviet government, inflicted major shocks on the existing narratives and self-visions. And while debates on the effectiveness of perestroika on the worldviews of Soviet citizens and elites are ongoing, we argue that it has left a distinct imprint on the perceptions of the ever-changing world, relativity of the historical truth and fluidity in this particular region. Relevant and vast literature on the post-Soviet space traces changes at the levels of identity; in views of how the world is organized and evolves; and how every-day matters, policies and issues are conceived and executed. Contributions to the Special Issue focus on both the process of change and major ruptures ("critical junctions"). Recognizing temporality as a key feature of any narrative unfolding from the past through present to the future, some of the scholars in this Issue prioritize a trajectory of the change "from past to present" (e.g. Sabatovych, Kleinberga and Vizgunova). Others provide an insight into the move "from the present to the future" (Heinrichs), or, proleptically, constructing political narratives in a way that disturbs normal temporal progression (Mondry and Pavlov). Change and continuity are always dependent on perspective. Contributions to the Special Issue map those perspectives when examining their cases studies.

Narratives, images and perceptions: conceptual models

The third theme of this issue is a conceptual engagement with the notions of images, perceptions and narratives in political communication around international relations to understand the unfolding of change in reality and construction of change in the minds of publics in the region. The already axiomatic statement "whose story is better, wins" (Nye 2019) gets additional traction at times of uncertainty and fluidity. In the contested post-Soviet space, recognition and reputation matter, and ideology and propaganda techniques influence everyday frames of political communication inside the states and exchanges across borders. As such,

contributions to this issue have engaged with several models considering a concept of "narrative" linking different disciplines together – international relations (IR), cognitive science, cultural studies, political science, communication studies.

Several contributions engage with the IR's strategic narrative theory (Miskimmon et al. 2013). This model proposes a three-level paradigm in the life-cycle of a strategic narrative: system, policy and identity levels. In this theory, system narratives define actors' views on international order; identity narratives describe how actors view themselves and the others within the system; and issue narratives reveal actors' attitude towards specific policy issues (Miskimmon et al., 2013, p.7). The theory also talks about three distinct yet intertwined phases in the information flow: formulation, projection and receptions. Contributions to the Special Issue explore cases on all levels. Papers by Klenberga and Vizgunova, Mondry and Pavlov, Chaban et al., Vernygora and Belonosova, Liekis and Rusinaitė deal with formulation and projection of the narratives. Reception of narratives is in main focus of the articles by Heinrichs, Sabatovych and Šumskas. Contributions to this Special Issue also bring analytical attention to different narrators (e.g. official discourses, think tank influencers, media, or youth).

Contributions to the Special Issues that engage with the strategic narrative theory introduce several conceptual innovations to it. For example, Kleinberga and Vizgunova add to the conceptualization of the alignment between the narrative levels. In their focus are two different types of alignment – between levels of narratives produced by the same narrator and between narratives projected by different narrators in one society (in this case, official political and media actors). Both cohorts are in the business of opinion-making, and narrative alignment in terms of consonance between them is telling and revealing of opportunities to persuade, especially in the democratic societies. The divergences are also important.

Adding to the strategic narrative theory conceptualization, our contributors develop the notion of temporality (long, short and medium) (Heinrichs); argue the central role of the identity-level narrative in the SNT model (Heinrichs); examine scope conditions for the stickiness of the narratives (Šumskas); explore the role of visuality and intertextuality in the projection of narratives (Chaban et al.); study the nature of public information important in understanding the reception stage within the strategic narrative cycle (Sumskas) as well as propose the notion of a hybrid toolbox where there is a need to promote strategic narrative in potentially

hostile environments (Liekis and Rusinaitė) and explore public diplomacy analytical instrumentarium used to communicate strategic narrative in such environments (Vernygora and Belonosova).

The Special Issue also features case studies that engaged with other theoretical models to explain perceptions, and more specifically their evolution. Sabatovych engages with a theoretical approach from the school of historical institutionalism, namely path dependency theoretical approach. While the school focuses on radical institutional change, Sabatovych demonstrate how this model may be used to advance perceptions studies by explaining the mechanism of change in public attitudes. This approach is useful when dramatic changes in outlook are taking place. In the case by Sabatovych, it is ideology that is accepted as a marker of an institutional change. Mondry and Pavlov explore the application of proleptic futurity in narratives of newspaper articles. They focus on the specific genre of editorials as it emerged in the late Soviet Union and demonstrate features of continuity between Soviet editorials and the current writing of important public and political personalities, such as Aleksandr Prokhanov, Aleksandr Dugin, and Vladislav Surkov. Mondry and Pavlov argue that employment of temporo-spatial aspects of the popular Neo-Eurasianist ideology as well as use of folk narratives based on the ability to dream allows the promotion of the notion of culture-specific temporality linked to the stability of country's geopolitical borders. They conclude that today's official Kremlin narratives increasingly rely on the proleptic temporality typical of the particularistic ideology of the Russian far right.

Methods

This Special Issue showcases a range of methods to study narratives and perceptions. These methods applied to analyse multiple sources of data such as media texts (editorials and daily news articles), media visuals (photographs and cartoons), opinion of elites and educated youth, official documents.

Heinrichs applies the method of narrative analysis to analyse youth opinion collected in the course of the Q-Sort focus groups in Latvia. Šumskas applies a mixed qualitative and quantitative content analysis techniques to identify indicators of media texts in Lithuanian e-press that correlate with higher audience demand for news that report Russia. Kleinberga and Vizgunova employ narrative analysis to analyse narratives on Ukraine, the EU and Russian that emerge in media and official discourses in Latvia.

Sabatovych undertakes an interpretative analysis of elite interviews comparing opinions across time. Chaban, Zhabotynska and Chaban apply the cognitive science protocol of the Narrative-Based Political Concept to analyse visual images accompanying Russian e-media news texts on Ukraine's no-visa agreement with the EU. Vernygora and Belonosova employ discourse analysis and process tracing when examining eight annual reviews of the Estonian Internal Security Service (2012-2019/20). Liekis and Rusinaitė focus on content analysis of the productions by the Russian think tanks that lean towards advocacy model and publish in English language, seeking to internationalise their advocacy model. Mondry and Pavlov use a thematic interpretative approach in their analysis of narratives which strategically blur the boundaries between objectivized style of newspaper articles and subjective style of editorials.

Structure of the Special Issue

The Special Issues starts with four article that dissect perceptions and narratives in the Baltic states: Vineta Klienberga and Elizabete Vizgunova on Latvia; Pauline Heinrichs on Latvia, Vlad Vernygora and Elizaveta Belonosova on Estonia, and Gintaras Šumskas on Lithuania. Article by Iana Sabatovych focuses on Ukraine, while article by Natalia Chaban, Svitlana Zhabotynska and Anatoliy Chaban deals with Russia's framing of Ukraine. Special Issue concludes with articles by Šarūnas Liekis and Viktorija Rusinaitė, and Henrietta Mondry and Evgeny Pavlov – both teams of authors elaborate opinion making discourses in Russia.

Concluding remarks

Some case studies demonstrate that post-Soviet cultural narratives are often concerned with aspects of transgenerational stability and the passing of cultural and ethnocultural knowledge to future generations. This concern is manifested in the notion of ontological future in the case of Latvia with its diminishing population and inter-EU migration of young people. Issues of demographics drive this preoccupation with the ontological future where, paradoxically, being part of EU brought challenges of assimilation and acculturation which threaten the national identity to no less a degree than in Soviet times. In Russia with its multiethnic population the complexities of transgenerational continuity are resolved in the narratives of cohesion achieved by the notions of scientific know-how and the alleged ability to dream about the future, all of which is underpinned by the construct of a shared past. Yet, internal and external strategic narratives differ.

Contributions to the Special Issue unpack complex visions, perceptions and narratives along the Self-Other continuum that emerge in each country discussed here and contemplate their impact on mapping the understanding of the geo-political future in this region and charting future actions.

References

Boulding, K.E. (1959), 'National images and international systems', *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 3(2), 120–31.

Chaban, N. and O. Elgström (2018b), 'On a journey with uncertain destination. Metaphors and images of the European Union in Russian and Ukrainian media after Brexit vote', *European Foreign Affairs Review*, 23(1/1), 159–76.

Chaban, N. and O. Elgström (2020), 'A perceptual approach to EU public diplomacy: Investigating collaborative diplomacy in EU–Ukraine relations', *The Hague Journal of Diplomacy*, 15(4), 488–516.

Chaban, N. and O. Elgström (2021a), 'Politicization of EU development policy: The role of EU external perceptions (case of Ukraine)', *Journal of Common Market Studies*, forthcoming.

Chaban, N. and O. Elgström (2021b), *The Ukraine Crisis and EU Foreign Policy Roles: Images of the EU in the Context of EU-Ukraine Relations*, Edward Elgar.

Duffy, B. (2018), *The Perils of Perceptions*, London: Atlantic Books.

Filippov, Alexander Nicolas Hayoz, and Jens Herlth, eds. (2020), *Centres and Peripheries in the Post-Soviet Space: Relevance and Meanings of a Classical Distinction*. Bern: Peter Lang.

Hopmann, J.T. (1996), *The Negotiation Process and the Resolution of International Conflicts*. Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press

Jakniunaite, Dovile (2020), "Permanent Periphery of the Baltic States." In Alexander Filippov, Nicolas Hayoz and Jens Herlth, eds., *Centres and Peripheries in the Post-Soviet Space: Relevance and Meanings of a Classical Distinction*. Bern: Peter Lang.
Mälksoo, Maria (2009). "Liminality and Contested Europeanness: Conflicting Memory Politics in the Baltic Space." In Eiki Berg and Piret Ehin, eds., *Identity and Foreign Policy: Baltic-Russian Relations and European Integration*. London: Routledge, 65-84.

Matheson, D., L. J. Kenix, and N. Chaban (2021) "Ukraine through a Baltic Lens: Regional Networks of Meanings," *Demokratizatsiya: The Journal of Post-Soviet Democratization* 29: 4, first online.

Miskimmon, A., B. O'Loughlin and L. Roselle. (2013), *Strategic Narratives: Communication Power and the New World Order*, New York: Routledge.

Morozov, Viatcheslav (2011), "Book Review. Reviewed Work: *Russia's European Agenda and the Baltic States.* (Routledge Contemporary Russia and Eastern Europe Series) by Janina Šleivyté." *Journal of Baltic Studies* 42: 2 (June): 305–307.

NBC (2005), Putin: Soviet Collapse a 'Genuine Tragedy' https://www.nbcnews.com/id/wbna7632057

Osborn, Andrew and Marrow, Alexander (2021), "Putin says Ukraine is Becoming an 'Anti-Russia', Pledges Response," https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/putin-says-russia-will-respond-ukraines-cleansing-political-space-2021-05-14/

Reuters (2018), "Putin, Before Vote, Says He'd Reverse Soviet Collapse if He Could: Agencies." https://www.reuters.com/article/us-russia-election-putin-idUSKCN1GE2TF

The Washington Post (2018), "Ukraine's not a country, Putin told Bush. What'd he tell Trump about Montenegro?" https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/posteverything/wp/2018/07/19/ukraines-not-a-country-putin-told-bush-whatd-he-tell-trump-about-montenegro/

The Washnigton Post (2021), "Russian troops massed near Ukrainian border begin pullback." https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/europe/russia-ukraine-military-border/2021/04/23/a21a3ac4-a3a9-11eb-b314-2e993bd83e31_story.html